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as a candidate for the French Academy at the very time of issuing such a work,¹ one of his most audacious. That however, would be in some degree an error, as we propose to show.

A great deal has been written on the subject of the Academy and the failure of eminent men to secure admission to its ranks. Various considerations have influenced it at different times, but it has generally shown a marked dislike for innovators, men of independent character, and pushing proclivities. To have presented oneself for election, even repeatedly, and to have failed to find acceptance, can be counted no dishonour. Victor Hugo came forward four times in succession, but only on the fourth did he secure the necessary number of votes. In the old days, to quote only a few instances, the doors of the Academy were shut to great men like Descartes and Moliere, and even to men of high standing, like La Rochefoucauld, the moralist. In our days Balzac was several times an unsuccessful candidate ; while if Dumas *fil*s found favour with the Immortals his father was always rigidly excluded from their midst. And apropos of the authors of "Eugenie Grandet" and " Les Trois Mousquetaires," as of Zola also, one may point out that it is only of recent years that

novelists have
figured, in any number, among the
Academicians. Even
at this time (1903) one can find merely four
men who
are essentially novelists among the forty.

It has been mentioned above that the
Academy has
shown no liking for innovators and men of
independent and

¹ " La BSte Humaine," Paris, Charpentier, 1890, 18mo,
419 pages. Some
copies on Dutch, India, and Japanese papers. Eighty-
eighth, thousand in
1893; ninety-ninth thousand in 1908.